

Message Text

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14

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 CCO-00 INRE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 OMB-01 T-03 IO-12

ACDA-19 RSR-01 /126 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7102

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

USMISSION UN PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

EUCOM

USDOCOSOUTH

S E C R E T NICOSIA 556

EO 11652: ADS

TAGS: PINS CY

SUBJECT: TIT FOR TAT -- PRO MAKARIOS BOMBERS ENTER FRAY

SUMMARY: PRO MAKARIOS BOMBERS RETALIATE FOR PREVIOUS NIGHTS PRO GRIVAS EXPLOSIONS. GOVT BEGINS POLICE PURGE. SITUATION IS STAND-OFF, WITH NEITHER SIDE APPARENTLY WILLING OR ABLE TO FORCE AN IMMEDIATE SHOWDOWN.

1. AS REPORTED BY MEDIA, BOX SCORE FOR BOMBINGS IN CYPRUS NIGHT OF MARCH 15-16 WAS 27: 6 IN NICOSIA, 18 IN LIMASSOL, 3 IN PAPHOS. IN CONTRAST WITH PREVIOUS NIGHTS EXPLOSIONS, ALL OR ALMOST ALL OF THESE WERE CARRIED OUT BY PRO-MAKARIOS SUPPORTERS AGAINST GRIVASITES. ONE POLICE STATION (KAKOPETRIA) WAS ATTACKED, BUT AS IN PAST WHEN RESISTANCE WAS OFFERED ATTACKERS DEPARTED. PRACTICE OF AVOIDING CASUALTIES CONTINUES ON BOTH SIDES. SURPRISINGLY, THERE
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HAVE BEEN NO ACCIDENTAL INJURIES.

2. COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MARCH 15 APPROVED DISMISSAL OF 32 POLICE PERSONNEL, PURSUANT TO PREVIOUS DECISION BY MAKARIOS (NICOSIA 537). THUS, AFTER MANY MONTHS OF TALK, GOVT IS ACTUALLY MOVING TO STRENGTHEN AND IMPROVE RELIABILITY OF POLICE. ACTION COMES VERY LATE, HOWEVER, AND IS ONLY A SMALL BEGINNING IN AN ENTERPRISE THAT MAY RESEMBLE TYRING TO CLEAN THE AUGEAN STABLES.

3. EVENTS OF LAST TWO NIGHTS HAVE AROUSED ANXIETY IN CYPRUS GOVT QUARTERS, BUT NO PANIC. SEVERAL MINISTERS AND HIGH OFFICIALS INCLUDING CHIEF OF POLICE ATTENDED SOCIAL FUNCTION EVENING MARCH 15 AND DISCUSSED SITUATION WITH AMBASSADOR. THERE IS A POLICE ALERT AS WELL AS A NATIONAL GUARD ALERT BUT CONDITIONS OF LIFE ARE NORMAL.

4. GOVT OFFICIALS CONTINUE DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF ROLE OF GREEK GOVT. THEY WERE NOT MUCH APPEASED BY GREEK ALTERNATE FONMIN CAVALIERATOS STATEMENT EXPRESSING CONCERN AT DEVELOPMENTS AND COUNSELING SELF RESTRAINT AND PRUDENCE TO ALL (ATHENS 1482). TO THEM THIS APPEARS TO BE MERELY ONE MORE OF ATHENS PRO MOTHERHOOD PRONOUNCEMENTS WHICH SCRUPULOUSLY AVOID TAKING SIDES BETWEEN GOVT AND GRIVASITES AND THUS OPERATE TO ADVANTAGE OF LATTER. UNTIL GREEK GOVT ALTERS THIS POSITION AND MAKES IT CLEAR NATIONAL GUARD CAN IF NECESSARY HELP TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC AUTHORITY IN CYPRUS, THIS ATTITUDE WILL CONTINUE TO PREVAIL HERE.

5. IN THIS CONNECTION, GOVT OBSERVERS NOTE THAT GREEK AMB LAGACOS HAS PROLONGED HIS STAY IN ATHENS INDEFINITELY, THAT HE HAS BEEN JOINED BY ONE OR MORE HIGH NATIONAL GUARD OFFICERS, AND THAT TWO OF THREE CYPRUS BISHOPS ARE ALSO IN ATHENS. GOVT HOPES CONVERSATIONS THERE WILL LEAD TO IMPROVEMENT IN CYPRUS SITUATION, BUT FEAR THEY MAY BE PRELUDE TO FURTHER ESCALATION. WE INCLINE TO FORMER VIEW, AND I HAVE SO STATED IN INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS.

6. ANALYZING POSITION AS OF THIS MOMENT WE WOULD SAY IT IS SOMETHING OF A STAND OFF. NEITHER SIDE HAS CAPABILITY CLEARLY TO DISPOSE OF THE OTHER. GRIVAS ELEMENTS ARE
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NOT SUFFICIENTLY NUMEROUS TO TOPPLE GOVT BY ONE DIRECT

MAJOR THRUST; GOVT, WITH " NEUTRAL" NATIONAL GUARD AND UNDEPENDABLE, QUASI DEMORALIZED POLICE, SEEMS UNABLE TO STRIKE BACK EFFECTIVELY AT HIT AND RUN GRIVAS ESCAPADES. IN THIS CANNY, BYZANTINE STYLE MAKARIOS IS UNDER- REACTING RATHER THAN OVER- REACTING. AS IN PAST, HIS FOLLOWERS TEND TO FALL INTO HAND- WRINGING POSTURES, BUT WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT WITH ANY LUCK HE WILL MANEUVER HIS WAY THROUGH THIS TIGHT SPOT AS HE HAS SO OFTEN BEFORE.

7. FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE EITHER SIDE IS PUSHING FOR A SHOWDOWN NOW. NEXT SYMBOLIC DATES FOR DEMONSTRATIVE ACTIONS ARE GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY MARCH 25 AND EXPIRATION OF BISHOPS 30 DAY GRACE PERIOD APRIL 7.
POPPER

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